



**Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**

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**FORMER BORDER PATROL AGENT INDICTED FOR TRANSPORTING
ILLEGAL ALIENS**

McALLEN, TX – A McAllen grand jury returned a six count indictment charging a former Border Patrol agent with transporting illegal aliens for commercial advantage and financial gain, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today.

William John Ferrone, 42, of Laredo, Texas, is accused of conspiracy to transport illegal aliens and five counts of transporting illegal aliens for the purpose of commercial advantage and private financial gain in an indictment returned on August 15, 2006. The case is to be prosecuted in the Laredo Division of the Southern District of Texas.

Ferrone, who had been scheduled to appear for arraignment in federal court in Laredo on Thursday, August 24, 2006, requested and was granted leave to waive his appearance in court. Instead, the court entered a plea of not guilty on Ferrone's behalf and set jury selection for September 15, 2006, at 1:30 p.m. before United States District Court Judge George Kazan in Laredo, Texas.

Ferrone, a former United States Border Patrol agent, was arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents during the early evening of July 28, 2006, after eleven illegal aliens were found in his black GMC SUV. Ferrone identified himself to agents as a former Border Patrol agent.

The investigation that led to the arrest of Ferrone began on July 28, 2006, after CBP agents received information from an anonymous caller concerning a black SUV seen picking up illegal aliens at the 35 mile marker of IH-35, approximately six miles north of the Border Patrol checkpoint on IH-35, according to allegations contained in a complaint filed on July 31, 2006. A second anonymous caller contacted CBP agents and after describing the black SUV described by the first caller, told agents about having seen the vehicle traveling northbound at the 39 mile marker along IH-35 in Encinal, Texas. Acting on the tips, a marked CBP unit located a black vehicle seeming to match the description given by the callers, noticed it appeared to be riding heavy and was occupied by the driver and several others in the back seat. The Border Patrol officers stopped the vehicle to conduct an immigration check at or near the 62-mile marker of IH-35 North. Agents identified the driver as Ferrone and found eleven Mexican and Honduran nationals -- all illegally in the United States -- in the vehicle.

Through further investigation, agents learned that Ferrone had picked up the group of illegal aliens along IH-35 about six miles north of the IH-35 Laredo Checkpoint after they had walked around the check-point through the brush. Ferrone allegedly told the aliens he was going to take them to a place where they could get help, but he did not make any stops after picking them up off of the interstate highway, according to the complaint.

Each of the six counts charged carries a maximum punishment of 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine upon conviction.

The case is currently being investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement with assistance from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Juan F. Alanis.

**An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence.
Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.**

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